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IRAN'S PRESIDENT SPEAKS OUT

AHMADINEJAD CHALLENGES NEW WORLD ORDER HEAD ON

MAHMOUD AHMADINEJAD

In this week's edition, AFP correspondent Michael Collins Piper provides a lengthy account of his meeting with Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, while the Persian leader was visiting New York City to speak before the UN. In this exclusive report for ***American Free Press***, Piper relates Ahmadinejad's views on such critical issues as Iran's nuclear ambitions and the likelihood of a U.S. invasion of his country.

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Iranian President Resists NWO

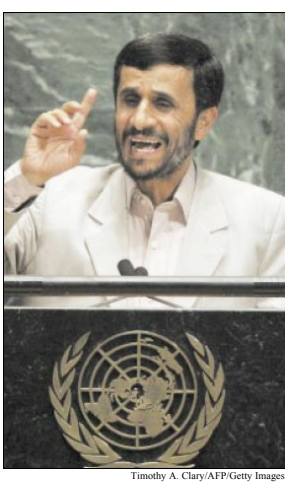
Says fate of humanity tied to what happens in Palestine

AS NOTED IN THE OCT. 2 EDITION of ***American Free Press***, AFP correspondent Michael Collins Piper was in New York City on Sept. 20 where he participated in a closed-door roundtable conference with Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad and a small group of invited journalists and academics. Later Piper was privately introduced to Ahmadinejad who invited Piper to come to Iran as his personal guest. What follows is Piper's special report on the comments by Ahmadinejad.

By Michael Collins Piper

Even as ***The New York Sun*** — a fanatically pro-Israel daily — was editorially demanding his arrest "as a material witness or even as a suspect" in terrorism, outspoken Iranian leader Mahmoud Ahmadinejad was arriving in New York for a whirlwind visit last week. Speaking to the United Nations and visiting privately with different groups, journalists and scholars were anxious to hear what the ex-university professor-turned Mayor of Tehran-turned Iranian president had to say. This comes at a time when the Islamic republic of Iran is at the center of the global spotlight, the focus of provocative, warlike rhetoric by Israel and its ally, George W. Bush.

Even Ahmadinejad's invitation to speak at the Manhattan headquarters of the Council on Foreign Relations (CFR), meeting place of the American foreign policy elite, created a stir. Led by Holocaust industry figure Elie Wiesel, Jewish members of the CFR threatened mass resignation if the Iranian leader was permitted to speak, although the revolt never materialized.

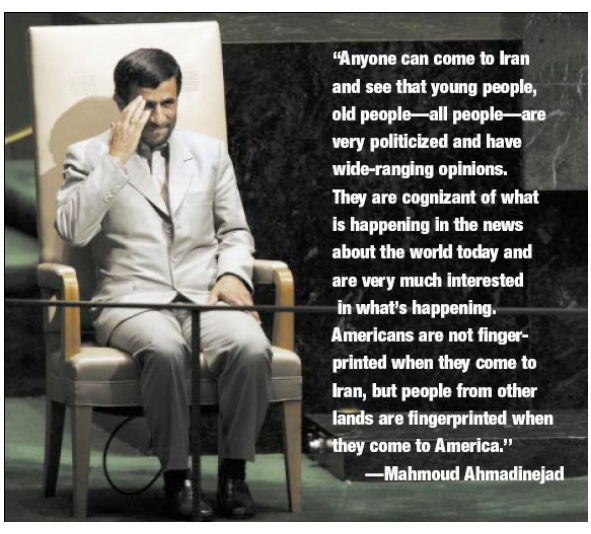

Timothy A. Clary/AFP/Getty Images

NEW WORLD ORDER: Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad addresses the 61st session of the United Nations General Assembly in New York, September 19. Ahmadinejad launched a scathing critique of the Bush regime, accusing it of using the UN to dominate international affairs and prevent his country from having nuclear power.

Wiesel — whose own credibility is questionable — told anyone who would listen that he believed Ahmadinejad should be declared ***persona non grata*** in the United States and that Iran itself should be expelled from the UN while Ahmadinejad is president.

In the end, the proposed formal dinner with Ahmadinejad at the CFR was nixed since Jewish members of the CFR said that they could not abide the thought of sitting down to dinner with the Iranian leader. Instead, Ahmadinejad met with a small number of CFR members in a less formal gathering.

As pro-Israel groups organized boisterous mass anti- Ahmadinejad demonstrations outside the United Nations and the hotel where Ahmadinejad was headquartered, there were some sane folks who did agree to speak with the Iranian president and listen to what he had to say, without interruption. This contrasted with the treatment often accorded Ahmadinejad by biased American media personalities and by the American president who refuses to speak to the Iranian leader.


"Anyone can come to Iran and see that young people, old people—all people—are very politicized and have wide-ranging opinions. They are cognizant of what is happening in the news about the world today and are very much interested in what's happening. Americans are not finger-printed when they come to Iran, but people from other lands are fingerprinted when they come to America."
—Mahmoud Ahmadinejad

Speaking at the gathering of the bellicose rhetoric of Bush and his Israeli allies, Ahmadinejad insisted U.S. policy makers are "too smart" to think seriously about war with Iran. In fact, he said, the threats and tough talk by the United States are being used by the White House to apply what he called "psychological pressure" on the European countries to support sanctions against Iraq.

Ahmadinejad predicted any military moves against Iran "will not favor the United States government or the American people." He pointed out that, even now, "All of the people of our region are beginning to hate the United States because of the policies of the Bush administration."

And it should be noted, that fully 118 countries recently aligned themselves with Iran's drive to secure nuclear energy for peaceful purposes — and against the Israel-U.S. axis — at the recent summit of nonaligned nations in Cuba.

The Iranian president expressed dismay that his recent extended letter to President Bush asking for an opening of dialogue, followed by an offer to publicly debate the American leader before the United Nations, has gone unanswered. "I hoped President Bush would respond to my letter to him. My letter was a human act, not a political act. I meet and dialogue with many people on a daily basis." He noted:

"There is no better way than holding dialogue. It can be across the spectrum. Any condition for dialogue is helpful to remove tensions. We've announced on numerous occasions that we are open for dialogue, but under conditions of mutual respect. Relations can be friendly, balanced and fair."

Expressing his personal interest and his nation's interest in, at the very least, opening up exchanges of scientists and academics between the United States and Iran, Ahmadinejad said: "We've been urging the institution of a direct flight between Tehran and New York for a long time. We will provide facilities for such exchanges." The Iranian president added: "We were very sorry when the United States refused our offer of humanitarian support for the victims of Hurricane Katrina."

Reflecting upon the possibility that the Bush administration and Israel not only seek to stop Iran from expanding its current nuclear program — which has been the publicly expressed reason for the campaign being waged against Iran — but also have the intention of toppling the Ahmadinejad government and forcing a complete change in the Iranian system of government, the Iranian leader remarked:

> Of course, we oppose this type of thinking by the U.S. administration. But they will never be able to impose regime change on Iran. Iran doesn't need a guardian. This thinking is part of the past.
>
> Why does Mr. Bush believe that he can think better than the Iranian people and choose their leadership? Imagine me — as the president of Iran — saying to the American people: "I want to save the American people." Think of how the Iranian people respond to President Bush's rhetoric of that type. What is it that Mr. Bush wants to hand to Iran?
>
> Iran has always been Iran, but we have now become independent of the West. Iran is stronger than ever. Iran is a nation of families, friends and neighbors who live like one family, and there will be reactions from the people of Iran to any interference in our nation's affairs.

As far as Iran's alleged desire to assemble nuclear weapons, Ahmadinejad noted that Iran's nuclear program is being supervised by the International Atomic Energy Agency. "It's round the clock, with cameras," he pointed out. In addition, he noted, Iran has signed the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty.

Ahmadinejad didn't mention it, but the truth is that Israel, which has one of the world's largest nuclear weapons arsenals, has never signed that treaty, nor does it even officially admit that it has nuclear capabilities.

In addition, although it is not widely reported by the American media — which portrays Iran feverishly working to build "the Islamic bomb"— the fact is, as noted by Ahmadinejad, Iran's supreme Muslim religious leader actually issued an edict, known as a "fatwa," prohibiting Iran's building of a nuclear weapon.

"In light of that," said Ahmadinejad, "it can be said that, religiously speaking, we are against nuclear weapons. We are fundamentally against nuclear weapons. They are for killing."

What's more, he pointed out: "The Iranian people don't need a nuclear weapon. For eight years, during the Iran-Iraq war, we had a voluntary army — including Christians — that rallied to the defense of the nation. Iranians have a love affair with their country."

Yet, Ahmadinejad asked this: "How can those nations that have nuclear arsenals object to those nations that are trying to produce nuclear fuel for peaceful purposes? The nuclear arena should not be monopolized by a select group of countries."

Responding to allegations that his country suppresses the media, Ahmadinejad noted, with a smile, that:

> If you look at the volume of criticism of the Iranian government and my administration in the media and in academia in Iran, it is substantial. In fact, one of our own government newspapers was recently shut down because it insulted a tribe within our country and that was in violation of the law. So our own government newspaper was punished for violating the law.
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> Iranian journalists accompanying me to the United States were denied visas by the United States government. These journalists are not allowed to travel beyond the confines of the United Nations building.
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> But after I was elected president of Iran, some 200 journalists from all over the world visited a small village where I lived for a very brief period as a small child and interviewed everybody they could find: the baker, the man who tended the fruit stand, all of the neighbors.

As far as political freedom in Iran is concerned, Ahmadinejad noted that in the presidential race in which he was elected, "there were eight different candidates from very different backgrounds, representing very diverse platforms."

He pointed out that "Our 290-member consultative assembly is wide-open to a variety of ideas and opinions. It is not run along party lines as you find in the United States, for example." He added:

"Anyone can come to Iran and see that young people, old people — all people — are very politicized and have wide-ranging opinions. They are cognizant of what is happening in the news about the world today and are very much interested in what's happening. Americans are not fingerprinted when they come to Iran, but people from other lands are fingerprinted when they come to America."

Of the efforts by the Christian and Muslim peoples of Palestine to win a homeland, Ahmadinejad reiterated his longtime concerns that reflect the thinking of millions of people around the globe:

"The fate of humanity is connected to what happens in Palestine. The time for occupation in Palestine has long ended. For a thousand years or more, Palestine was Palestine and nothing else. However, for the last 60 years we have seen nothing but hostility and bloodshed and tragedy there. Small babies being killed. Homes destroyed. For what? What is the root cause? The Palestinian people should be able to return to their homeland and choose their own leadership there."

Addressing hysterical charges that he is a "Holocaust denier," as has been repeatedly mentioned in American media reports about him, Ahmadinejad said:

> I have been criticized in the media for asking for scientific evidence relating to events that were said to have happened during World War II. During that war, some 60 million people died. Yet one small group has gained prominence as victims as if other lives don't matter.
>
> In our society today, God and democracy can be freely researched and questioned. There are many books and papers and commentaries published on these topics, but the question of events in World War II cannot be discussed.
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> I believe, in the spirit of understanding, that we need to do further research in this realm, for the more we understand what really happened, the more we can do to alleviate problems in our society.
>
> In the end, after all, if these things happened, they happened in Europe. They did not happen in Palestine. So therefore, why did the Palestinians have to pay the price? There are five million displaced Palestinians in the world today.

Reflecting in general on the world situation, the Iranian president concluded: "In our world today there are small groups that seek power and wealth. But most societies seek freedom, peace and justice. We have said we are against the imposition of a unilateral position upon the world. The United Nations must be independent of any single power."

It is not for nothing that Ahmadinejad personally impresses even hostile journalists who meet him. He is witty, whip-smart, deeply spiritual and intellectual and as even Fareed Zakaria, editor of ***Newsweek International***, admitted in ***The Washington Post***: "I was struck by how little he conformed to the picture of a madman . . . always calm and intelligent."

Ahmadinejad has established himself as a firm voice against the forces that demand submission to a New World Order.

A journalist specializing in media critique, Michael Collins Piper is the author of ***Final Judgment***, the controversial "underground bestseller" documenting the collaboration of Israeli intelligence in the assassination of John F. Kennedy. He is also the author of ***The High Priests of War***, ***The New Jerusalem***, ***The Judas Goats***, and ***Dirty Secrets***, all available from First Amendment Books and America First Books. He has lectured on suppressed topics in places as diverse as Malaysia, Japan, Canada, Russia and Abu Dhabi.

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